Chill Pill

Breadcrumbs are a feast if you're starving



People look out at a sunset. The Chill Pill column is a column about slowing down during a busy life and discussing how to make college more manageable.

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People are often easily satisfied today. Someone texts you back within a reasonable amount of time — fantastic. Someone makes plans with you without having to be asked 20 times — groundbreaking. Someone remembered something you told them three months ago — give them a trophy. But at what point did the bare minimum become so impressive?

And trust me, I get it. It feels incredible to feel wanted, and it feels amazing to be remembered. But at what point did we start treating the bare minimum like a five-course meal?

Welcome to Chill Pill, a Friday biweekly column about slowing down in a world that rarely lets us do so as college students. Here, we will talk about balance, burnout and the small things that can make college life feel a little less overwhelming.

I think friendships are probably the easiest place to spot this behavior, and you know the friend I'm talking about. The one you always text first, the one you always make plans with, the one whose life updates you always somehow know, despite yours always coincidentally being forgotten about. Then on a random Thursday, they send you a text first, and suddenly, it's a national holiday. We tell ourselves they're busy, they have a lot going on or maybe they're just bad at texting. And that could be true because we are college kids with crazy schedules. But there's a difference between being understanding and making excuses for someone who doesn't seem to make the same effort.

Romantic relationships are entirely different stories. I think (yes, I am admitting it too) we've all been guilty of turning the smallest interaction into something much bigger than what it was. They liked your Instagram story? #wifedat. They remembered your Starbucks order? #wifedat. And don't let them text you first, because I can hear the wedding bells ringing. It is funny how we quickly convince ourselves that someone is interested based on the smallest amount of effort. And before we know it, we spend an embarrassing amount of time analyzing a text message that probably took someone 12 seconds to write.

Sometimes, we're so busy celebrating the fact that someone threw us a crumb that we forget to ask why we're still hungry.

But I think there is something to say about the way people approach things in general. We get so accustomed to accepting whatever comes our way that we stop questioning whether it is actually enough, convincing ourselves that a little attention, a little effort or a little recognition is all we can expect. And this isn't a dig at appreciating the small things by any means. But there's a difference between appreciating what someone gives you and convincing yourself that you shouldn't want more.

Wanting more isn't bad.

We get comfortable with what is familiar, even when what is familiar isn't necessarily fulfilling. We look for opportunities that barely excite us, relationships that leave us questioning our worth and situations that give us just enough to keep us around. People confuse gratitude for being satisfied. Not every gesture needs to be grand, not every relationship needs constant attention and not every day is going to feel like a feast (unless it's Nov. 26).

I think it is worth reminding ourselves that we can be grateful for breadcrumbs without pretending we're full. We can appreciate someone's effort while recognizing when that effort isn't enough. We can understand that people get busy, relationships take work and life doesn't always go as planned.

But we also have to stop convincing ourselves that wanting consistency, conversation and genuine effort is demanding.

Sometimes, you need to say, "Oh, I'm not hungry," and find a better plate.



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